



# Ministry of Defence

Ministry of Defence  
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Whitehall  
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United Kingdom  
Telephone : +44 (0)20 721 89000

Our Reference: [REDACTED]



14 November 2014

Dear [REDACTED],

Thank you for your letter of 15 October 2014 requesting the following information:

- 1. The MOD annual performance figure for the average MOD time taken to reply to a letter received from a person, public or private sector individual, authority, PLC or representative concern located in Great Britain that require an MOD response.*
- 2. The Performance Figure and it's definition for the MOD response time to reply to received correspondence in Great Britain that requires an MOD response under the definition.*
- 3. The annual number of letters received by the MOD from those detailed in the above items 1 and 2*
- 4. The number of application forms received by the MOD since June 6th for consideration and procedure to the award of the Legion D'Honneur for D Day veterans.*
- 5. The number of Legion D'Honneur application forms and/or enquiries (a) responded to by the MOD (b) the MOD reply performance figure of the time taken to (b(i))acknowledge or (b(ii)) respond to these applications and (c) of the applications received the number of Legion D'Honneur awarded.*
- 6. The calendar date/s when an award of the Legion D'Honneur commenced and the number of awards that have already been awarded to veterans.*
- 7. The number of veterans that await approval and receipt of the Legion D'Honneur."*

I am treating your correspondence as a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOI Act).

I would like to begin by addressing parts 4 to 7 of your request first, as I interpret these as the main focus of your request, and I will provide as much assistance as I can regarding your father's application for the Chevalier de L'Ordre National de la Legion, which for ease of reference I will refer to as the Legion D'Honneur.

The Government and the nation will never forget the hard work, great bravery and distinction of all former Servicemen and women who served their country during the Second World War. It is imperative that we do not forget the great sacrifices that were made in the name of our freedom on 6 June 1944. Your father's loyal service is still appreciated today, therefore I apologise that no acknowledgement was sent regarding the receipt of his application.

The decision in July by the Government of France to award the Legion d'Honneur to those involved in the Liberation of France in 1944 has attracted a very high level of interest, with around 2,500 applications received, so far. The MOD is working closely with the French Embassy on the detail of each application. We have already processed hundreds of applications, and are working hard at the remainder. We are aware the wait can be frustrating for veterans and their families and will endeavour to keep applicants updated where we can.

I hope you will appreciate the reaction to this generous offer by the French Government has been so high that the officer handling this matter has not been able to send out acknowledgements to applications received through the post. However, I can confirm that your father's application for the Legion D'Honneur will be processed and submitted to the French authorities, who will take the final decision regarding the award.

About 40 awards have been presented since (and including) the Anniversary celebrations in Normandy; but all these cases were from a list pre-approved by the French authorities when they were seeking to make awards in Normandy. Since the presentations in Caen, there have been two ceremonies in London at which small numbers have been presented, again all drawing on this original list.

Turning now to parts 1 to 3 of your request, I have to advise that we are unable to answer these parts without exceeding the appropriate cost limit for FOI requests as we do not hold the data you have requested in a manner that enables statistics to be produced.

Section 12 of the FOI Act makes provision for public authorities to refuse requests for information where the cost of dealing with them would exceed the appropriate limit, which for central government is set at £600. This represents the estimated cost of one person spending 3.5 working days in determining whether the department holds the information, and locating, retrieving and extracting it.

It is the way you have presented your request, in points 1 to 3 that causes them to be unanswerable within costs, because the areas covered by your request are too broad. The various types of correspondence relevant to your FOI request are received and responded to by many different parts of the MOD, each with its own performance target and statistical records. For example - Correspondence that would fall under point 1 in your request include: Parliamentary Questions, Ministerial Correspondence, Treat Official Correspondence, Data Protection Act (DPA) Subject Access Requests, FOI/EIR requests (including genealogy requests for service histories), Medal and Medal replacement requests, claims for compensation, pension and payment enquiries, military aid to the Civil Authority (MACA) requests, and requests for military presence at memorial events.

To meet Section 16 of the FOI Act (Advice and Assistance) I can advise that if you rephrase your request to focus on a specific area, then it may be possible for the appropriate area of the MOD to respond accordingly within costs. The request would be considered as a new FOI request and may still be considered exempt under a Section of the FOI Act.

Notwithstanding the above, the Ministry of Justice publish FOI statistics for all Government Departments and they can be viewed online here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/government-foi-statistics>

If you are not satisfied with this response or you wish to complain about any aspect of the handling of your request, then you should contact me in the first instance. If informal resolution is not possible and you are still dissatisfied then you may apply for an independent internal review by contacting the Information Rights Compliance team, 1st Floor, MOD Main Building, Whitehall, SW1A 2HB (e-mail [CIO-FOI-IR@mod.uk](mailto:CIO-FOI-IR@mod.uk)). Please note that any request for an internal review must be made within 40 working days of the date on which the attempt to reach informal resolution has come to an end.

If you remain dissatisfied following an internal review, you may take your complaint to the Information Commissioner under the provisions of Section 50 of the Freedom of Information Act. Please note that the Information Commissioner will not investigate your case until the MOD internal review process has been completed. Further details of the role and powers of the Information Commissioner can be found on the Commissioner's website, <http://www.ico.gov.uk>.

Yours sincerely,

A black rectangular redaction box covering the signature of the sender.